

# LEVELING UP STUDENT AMBITION BY AARON WELLS



x



# THE CHALLENGE

2020 was a write-off, especially for students. There was a sense of optimism as we approached Christmas, but the awful second wave of Covid-19 soon shattered this. Apart from being stuck at home again for the foreseeable, students felt uncertain about what the world would look like when they finished school.

With college applications lower than previous years, how would we encourage uncertain teenagers (and their parents) to consider University College Birmingham (UCB) for their future when things are so up in the air?



# WHAT STUDENTS KNOW US FOR

UCB has always been known as a well respected vocational educational institute, particularly for culinary courses. Brad Carter, Founder of Carters of Moseley, amongst many others, trained at UCB and went on to have successful careers in hospitality.

But UCB is not a one trick pony. It has a number of vocational course to suit 'hands on' type learners who prefer practical over theory. How could we inspire students to take a course of their dreams?



# OBJECTIVES

Having a solid brand and reputation meant that paid media advertising relied upon less in previous years. But 2020 and 2021 were not like any other year, as we all know. Students faced uncertainty and many options, so we needed to create a campaign that:

- **Got UCB back on their radar** by creating impactful communications
- **Shifted their perception of UCB** being a 'food only' college in Birmingham
- **Drove college applications** by 300 during the campaign period

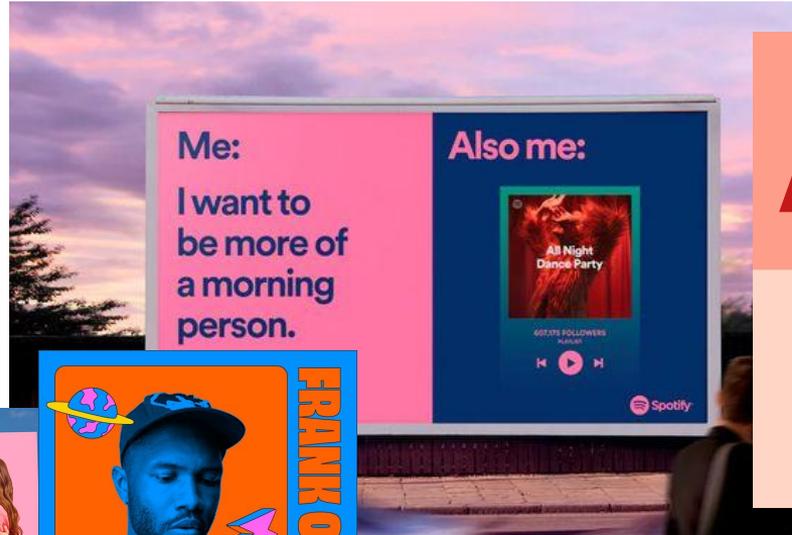


# CULTURAL REFERENCES

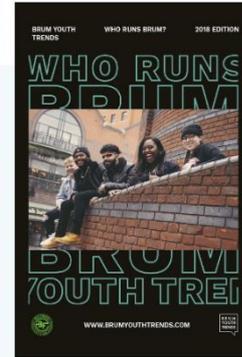
Being relevant also meant using borrowed interest. The famous phrase 'Level up' was positive and motivating to both our audiences and was being used on TikTok to the song 'Level Up' by Ciara.

We were inspired to develop our single-minded proposition, a clear promise that encouraged them to take action: Level Up with UCB.





**WHO ELSE IS ADVERTISING WELL TO THE AUDIENCE?**



**"ALMOST HALF SAID EXPLICITLY THAT THEY  
DO NOT WANT TO TALK TO BRANDS USING  
SOCIAL MEDIA"**

**"A THIRD SAID THEY DON'T FOLLOW A SINGLE BRAND"**

**"THOSE THAT DO, HAVE CLEAR EXPECTATIONS. THEY WANT EITHER MATERIAL GAIN OR THEY WANT TO BE ENTERTAINED. THAT'S PRETTY MUCH IT. HAVING A CONVERSATION DOES NOT FEATURE."**

**"50% OF PEOPLE GO ONLINE TO WASTE TIME.  
SO LET'S GIVE THEM SOME REALLY COOL SHIT  
TO DO WHEN THEY GET THERE"**

On Red Bull's social strategy @ The Youth Marketing Strategy Conference

**"88.8% OF YOUNG PEOPLE IN THE UK SEE  
THEMSELVES AS CREATIVE"**

**"A TRADITIONAL NOTION OF CREATIVITY DOES NOT  
RESONATE WITH OUR YOUNGER GENERATIONS -  
CREATIVITY IS NOT JUST ABOUT THE ARTS, BUT THE  
ROLE IT PLAYS IN ALL SECTORS, JOBS AND CAREERS"**

# OUR SINGLE MINDED PROPOSITION

The pandemic forced students to stay at home for a number of months which meant a lot were falling behind and feeling uncertain about where they were headed after year 11.

Students had ambition, but they didn't know where to channel it. They needed to be inspired by a clear message that encouraged them to take action which was:

**Level Up with UCB**

# THE STRATEGY

**A great strategy always drives excellent creative work. Here we have our strategy:**

**GET:** Driven, 'hands on' type students (and their parents) studying GCSEs.

**WHO:** Feel a sense of uncertainty about their prospects in a world gripped by Covid-19.

**TO:** See UCB as the best choice to overcome any doubts about where they were headed in life.

**BY:** Using a mix of paid digital media to encourage students to 'Level up' with a UCB college course.



## GOAL

To increase college applications by 200–300 for the September 2021 intake

## POSITIONING

UCB is the college of choice for students who want practical, hands on learning. With a successful track record of students who have gone on to do great things, plus the exceptional £130m facilities, we will support you through your journey to Level Up your career.

## AUDIENCES

### PARENTS

### STUDENTS

## BARRIERS / PAIN POINTS

"I know I don't want, and that's being stuck in books! I want hands on learning, but Covid has changed a lot of things, and I'm feeling a bit unsure about my next step"

"My son/daughter is more vocational than academic, and I'm unsure on where they should go in September, considering what's happened in the last 12 months!"

## COMMS TASK

Show how UCB can help them Level Up their next step

Show how UCB can help them achieve their goal of providing a solid career path for their child

# MEDIA STRATEGY

**SEE**



**BUILD AWARENESS**

Drive brand awareness through high frequency ad serving using emotional led messages

**THINK**



**INCREASE DEMAND**

Introduce nudges such as tailored social proof to increase consideration.

**DO**



**CONVERT TO APPLICATION**

Retargeting strategy based on video views and website visits, excluding low engagement consumers

# CHANNEL STRATEGY

Parents and students have very different digital media habits and subsequently engage with platforms differently, therefore we implemented a tailored channel strategy to ensure we reached parents and students respectively.

## STUDENTS CHANNEL STRATEGY

Facebook Network 

TikTok 

Display

Spotify  Spotify

## PARENTS CHANNEL STRATEGY

Facebook Network 

Spotify  Spotify

Display

Tasks	Tactics	Campaign Roll Out					
		JANUARY	FEBRUARY	MARCH	APRIL	MAY	JUNE
<p><b>MASS AWARENESS</b></p> <p>Building brand salience and memorability</p>	<p>Outdoor</p> <p>Radio</p>  <p>Display</p> <p>Paid social</p>  			<p>SPOTIFY AUDIO</p>	<p>PAID SOCIAL</p>	<p>DISPLAY</p>	<p>OUTDOOR</p>
<p><b>DRIVE COLLEGE APPLICATIONS</b></p>	<p>Paid social (traffic and conversions)</p>			<p>PAID SOCIAL (FACEBOOK)</p>			

Gaz - can you tidy this up and add in logos?

# CREATIVE MOOD BOARD



**CONFIDENT FUN  
HANDS-ON WITH OVERSIZE PROPS  
RELATED TO CAREERS**

# CREATIVE



A range of confident 16–18 year old models were selected for a photoshoot alongside neon style CGI props to represent college course and the headline 'Level up your ambition.'

# DISPLAY



# FACEBOOK AND INSTAGRAM

**University College Birmingham 14-19 students**  
 Sponsored · 🌐

Take your hair and beauty skills to the next level. Discover our practical courses in make-up artistry and beauty therapy.

[UCB.AC.UK](https://www.ucb.ac.uk)  
**Level up your ambition**

[APPLY NOW](#)

Sponsored

[Apply Now](#)

ucbofficial Step up to your future 🏃. Discover our practical courses in sport & fitness

**University College Birmingham 14-19 students**  
 Sponsored · 🌐

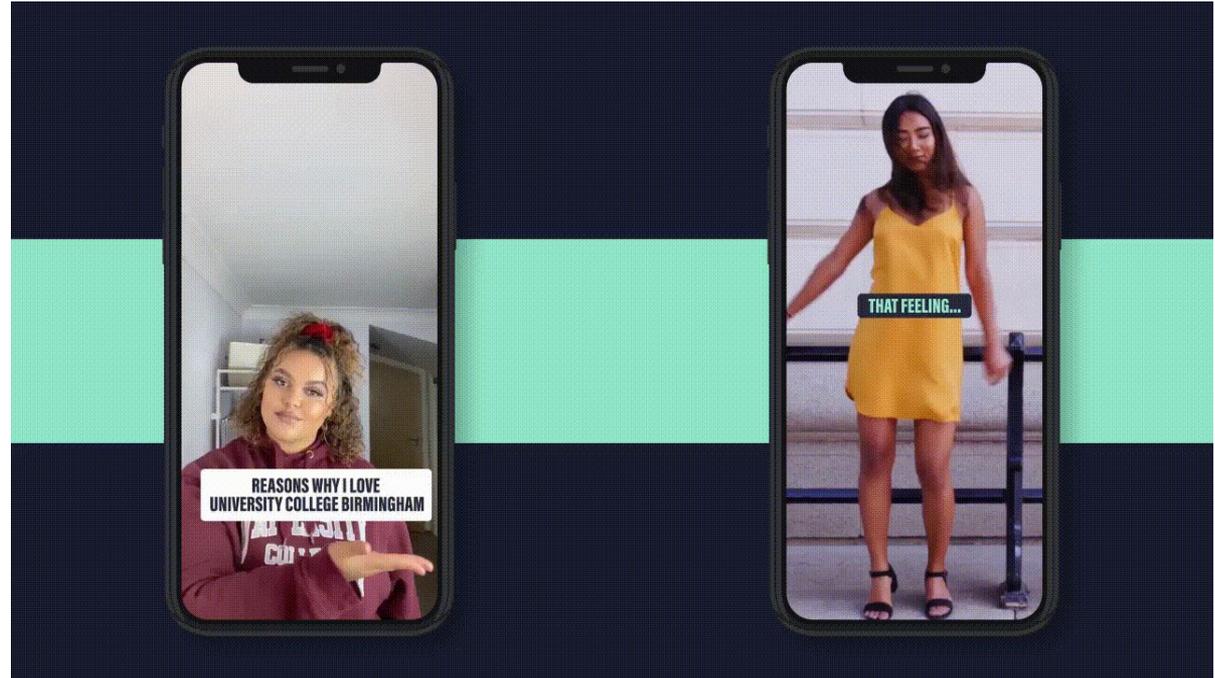
A world of possibility awaits 🌍 Discover our practical course in Tourism, Aviation, Events and Hospitality.

[UCB.AC.UK](https://www.ucb.ac.uk)  
**Level up your ambition**

[APPLY NOW](#)

# TIKTOK

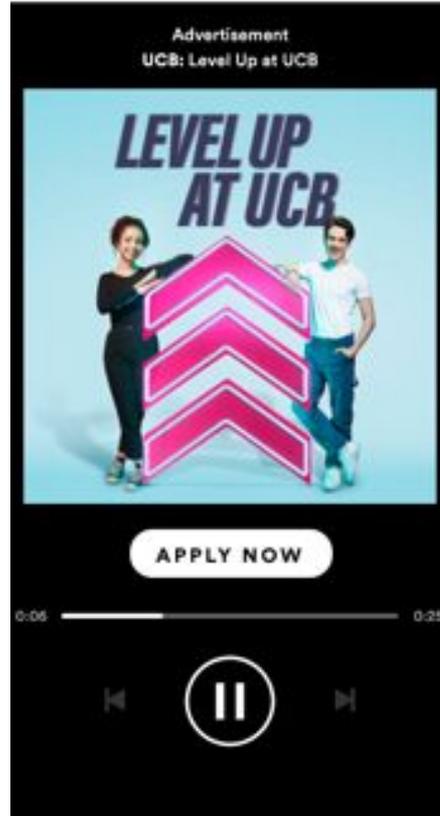
We knew we needed to show up and be authentic on TikTok. That's why we used a combination of existing UCB footage as well as user generated content to create a suite of TikTok ads that talked about the reasons why students chose UCB Birmingham.



# SPOTIFY



**PARENTS**



**STUDENTS**

# THE RESULTS

**REACH**

**2,342,406**

(-81% VS TARGET)

**LINK CLICKS**

**41,019**

(+111% VS TARGET)

**AVERAGE CTR**

**1.75%**

(+16% VS TARGET)

**COLLEGE APPLICATIONS**

**+56%** vs 2019

**+39%** vs 2018

# CLIENT TESTIMONIAL

*“We were impressed by Big Cat’s understanding of our target audience and our offer, from the initial pitch, strategy, to optimising the campaign. We invested in high quality, distinctive creative and photography, which we were happy with, and crucially, it drove our college application numbers year on year through a multi-channel marketing approach.”*

**Steph Gregan, Senior Digital Marketing & Web Content Officer**

# CREDITS

Aaron Wells – Planner

Jon Sharp – Creative Director

Andy Robson – Copywriter

Amy Marsh – Senior Account Manager

Lyndsey Turner – Art Director

Gaz Burns – Motion Design

Sally Hawkesford – Performance Marketing

Kirstie Jones – Performance Marketing

Scott Lapidge – Photography